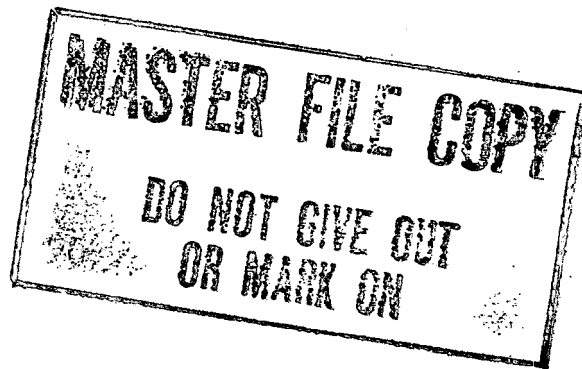


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THE SOUTH PACIFIC:  
NEW PROBLEMS FOR THE  
UNITED STATES

Information available as of 28 April 1983 was  
used in the preparation of this Estimate.

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THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS.

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

*Also Participating:*

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

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The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

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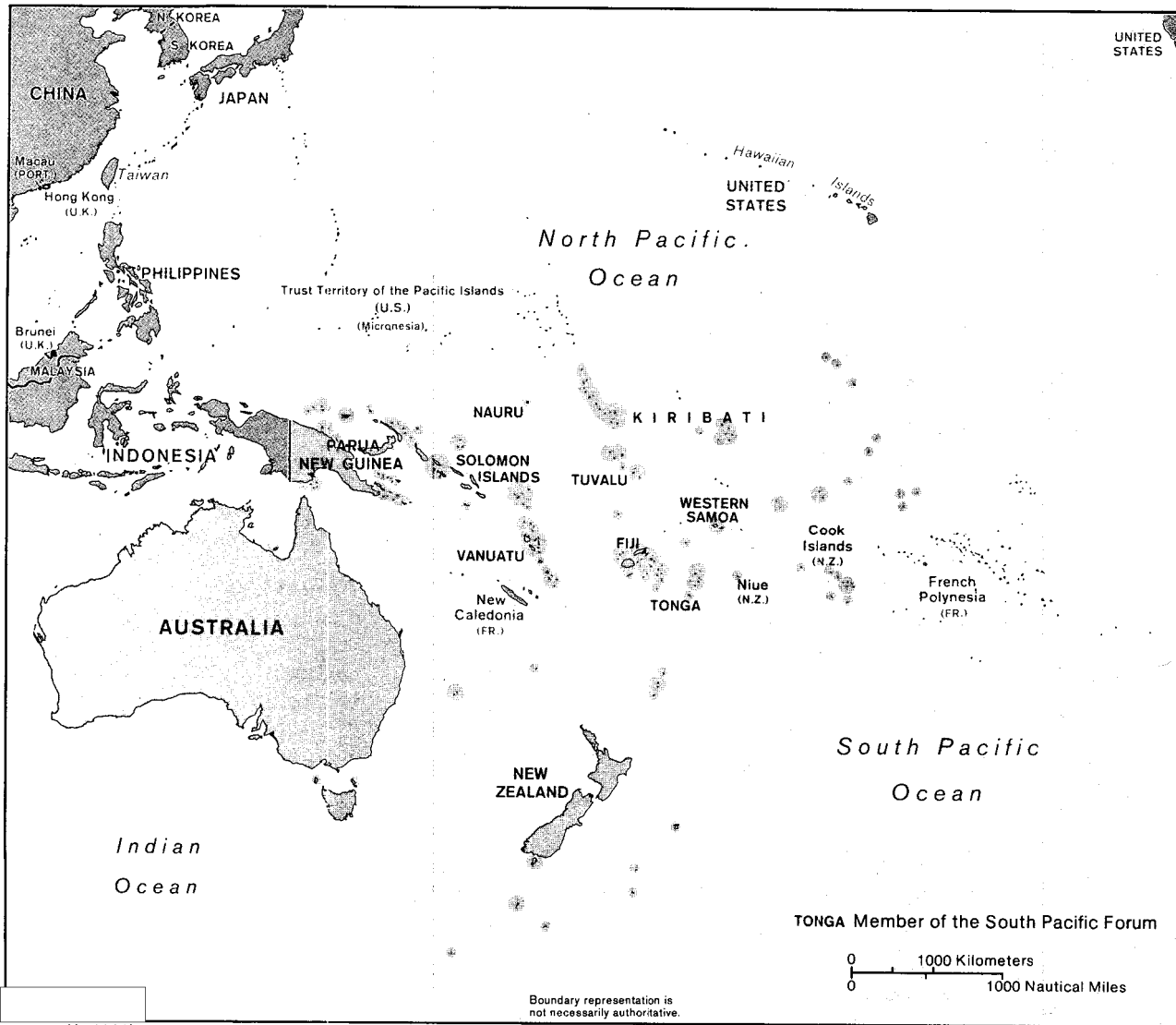
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### South Pacific Forum Members



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## SCOPE NOTE

The South Pacific is important to the United States because of the sea and air lanes that run through it, and the relationships with the United States, Australia, and New Zealand that continue to operate in favor of the West. This Estimate examines such problems as persistent Soviet efforts in the region and troublesome antinuclear sentiment. ☐

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The area covered by this Estimate includes the nine independent South Pacific nations—Papua New Guinea, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Western Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Nauru—plus the two major French territories—New Caledonia and French Polynesia (see map). The paper identifies and discusses developments that will require US attention as the young island nations become more confident and assertive. South Pacific views of the US Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia) are touched upon; Micronesia itself is not included in this Estimate because it is still under US Government administration as a United Nations strategic trusteeship. ☐

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## KEY JUDGMENTS

The United States faces problems with South Pacific governments over several issues, including the movement of nuclear-powered naval vessels, environmental matters, and exploitation of ocean economic resources. These problems reflect both an increased sense of regional identity within the area and a waning of the good will the United States developed in the area during World War II. [REDACTED]

Strong islander antinuclear sentiment has affected the United States through bans on port calls by nuclear-powered ships in the US fleet. If port bans should multiply, they could inhibit movements by the US 7th Fleet. The perception that Washington has been slow to relinquish territorial claims also nettles the islanders, as does US consideration of using the Pacific for nuclear waste disposal, and what the islanders see as US frustration of their aims to earn money through licensing tuna fishing and seabed mining. [REDACTED]

Increased Soviet interest in the area and efforts to establish a diplomatic presence also bear close watching. The Soviets, moreover, will be alert to any opportunity for using surrogates such as Cuba to undercut US influence. If the Soviets achieve greater success in the South Pacific than now anticipated, the United States could then face a new threat to the sea lanes so important to the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. The islanders' economic problems could in time weaken resistance to Soviet blandishments. [REDACTED]

These problems aside, we expect that over the next five years the South Pacific will remain a basically stable region with Western-oriented governments and populations. This stability will be buttressed by a growing sense of regionalism and the practice of seeking consensus on matters of common concern. This placid picture could become marred, however, by the erratic behavior of Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) and the possibility of turbulent agitation for independence in French New Caledonia. [REDACTED]

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## DISCUSSION

### The Current Scene

#### US Strategic Concerns

1. The traditional romantic view of the South Pacific is no longer realistic. The area has become a collection of assertive ministates outspoken about US policies they see as harmful. US consideration of disposing of nuclear waste, the movement of US nuclear-powered naval vessels in the area, and US policies on tuna fishing and on law of the sea all raise area hackles. [ ]

2. The South Pacific has strategic and economic importance for the United States. The principal sea and air routes to Australia and New Zealand cross the region, and its seas contain tuna grounds important to the US fishing industry. Australia and New Zealand look after trilateral ANZUS interests, but this arrangement is eroding with the development of a greater international presence in the region. Both Australia and New Zealand advocate a stronger US role, although one short of impinging on their proprietary feelings about the area. [ ]

3. Beyond its present interest to the United States, the South Pacific could assume greater importance if use of other conventional sea lanes became tenuous. A confrontation with the Soviet Union in the North Pacific or closure of straits in the Indonesian archipelago would force increased use of routes through the southwestern South Pacific. [ ]

4. The growing presence of outside powers in the South Pacific is marked by stepped-up fishing by Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Soviet Union—in addition to expansion by the US tuna fleet. Sino-Soviet rivalry has also been injected into the region by as yet fruitless Soviet efforts to establish a diplomatic presence—countered by warnings to island governments by the three Chinese embassies in the region about the dangers of dealing with the Soviets. Soviet economic blandishments have caused the islanders occasionally to waver in their basic mistrust of the Soviet Union. US interests are also increasingly threatened by the growing assertiveness of the independent island nations

over key US policies—particularly on nuclear and environmental issues and on exploitation of ocean economic resources. [ ]

#### The Australian–New Zealand Role

5. Since World War II, the United States has largely left to its ANZUS allies the task of promoting close political ties between the South Pacific and the West, and this arrangement continues to be in the US interest. Despite periodic expressions from Australia and New Zealand of a desire for a larger US presence in the South Pacific, they would—in line with their proprietary feelings about the area—tend to view any significantly greater US involvement as an infringement into their domain. [ ]

6. Both Australia and New Zealand have longstanding ties with the South Pacific, and the New Zealanders in particular have excellent relations with the islanders. New Zealand earmarks over 60 percent of its foreign aid for the Pacific islands, amounting to \$40 million in the fiscal year ending in March 1981. Australia, focusing until recently on its former trusteeship, Papua New Guinea, has expanded its diplomatic representation among the new small island nations. [ ]

7. Australia and New Zealand can be counted on to continue a moderating role through their membership in the South Pacific Forum, where they have shown considerable skill in offering helpful suggestions that stop short of triggering the islanders' touchiness about unsolicited advice. They have been helpful to the United States, for example, in trying to mute anti-nuclear rhetoric. They have pointed out to some island governments the inconsistency between the islanders' desire to come under the ANZUS security umbrella and their reluctance to allow port calls by US warships. [ ]

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**Growing Regionalism**

8. Despite the distances and ethnic diversity, a sense of regionalism has developed since the early 1970s. The 13-year-old South Pacific Forum includes the nine independent countries plus the New Zealand dependencies of Niue and the Cook Islands. In addition, Australia and New Zealand participate because of their proximity to and long association with the island countries, and because the islanders look to them as continuing sources of economic aid. UNCODED

9. Initially little more than a social club, the South Pacific Forum has developed into a regional organization that is beginning to deal with political issues that touch on US and other nonregional interests. Regional awareness has fostered a greater quickness to criticize the policies of outside powers that are seen as insensitive to regional concerns. France has borne the brunt of the new outspokenness for its nuclear testing in French Polynesia and its slowness in moving its Pacific territories toward independence. The United States has recently come under increasing attention, however, as islanders express concern over US consideration of disposing of nuclear waste in the Pacific and over the safety of nuclear-powered warships moving across Pacific waters.<sup>1</sup>

**Soviet Activities**

10. The Soviet Union has tried persistently and unsuccessfully since 1976 to establish resident embassies and secure fishing rights in the area.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan accentuated distrust of the Soviets by area governments and added to doubts among the island states about their ability to control Soviet activities in their area and to prevent Soviet subversion of their societies. The only cracks in this stance have been minor: island leaders hesitantly accepted a Soviet offer to conduct an oceanographic research program and occasionally have granted permission to Soviet cruise ships carrying West European passengers to dock in island ports. The Soviets seek to infiltrate the fledgling regional trade union movement through Australian and New Zealand leftist unionists with longtime contacts in the area. Although success

appears limited to date, the Soviets apparently see promise in this oblique approach which avoids direct rejection by the island governments.

11. A prime Soviet effort will be to deny US access to South Pacific ports through efforts to increase already strong antinuclear sentiment in the region. Blocked from direct access by strong regional suspicion of them, the Soviets will cultivate the use of surrogates such as Cuba, which recently exchanged diplomatic relations with Vanuatu.

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**Chinese Presence**

12. Beijing has been more successful than Moscow. The Chinese have established embassies in Fiji, Western Samoa, and Papua New Guinea and have small aid programs in all three countries. Despite initial misgivings among the island governments over the size of the embassies, they are now satisfied that Chinese diplomatic behavior has been correct. The Chinese seem to expend much of their energy in warning the islanders of the dangers in dealing with the Soviet Union or Taiwan.

**Other Country Actors**

13. *Japan* has become increasingly active in the region, concluding joint fishing arrangements, providing fisheries aid, and purchasing fishing licenses. Japan's interest in the South Pacific is heightened by its increasing dependence on operations in foreign fishing zones, which now provide 40 percent of the total Japanese catch. Japanese aid to the region is also growing, totaling \$82 million by 1981; one-third has been fisheries aid. Japan has also been responsive to the island nations' desire to exploit seabed minerals in their territorial waters. At a recent conference on seabed prospecting, Tokyo committed itself to two surveys of the ocean floor. Although appreciative of Japanese aid, the island states resent the Japanese practice of making aid contingent on conclusion of fishing arrangements satisfactory to Tokyo. They are also disturbed by Japanese plans to dump nuclear waste in North Pacific waters off Japan.

14. *West Germany* since the mid-1970s has been involved in modest aid programs in some of the South Pacific nations. German interest, although still very

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limited, is to encourage stability and resistance to Soviet encroachments in an area in which there was a German presence into the early 1900s. ☐

15. *Malaysia* offered modest aid programs when Prime Minister Mahathir visited several South Pacific island states last year. Malaysia apparently has been designated by its partners in the Association of South-east Asian Nations for contacts with the South Pacific. Mahathir's readiness to share Malaysia's expertise and skills with the undeveloped countries of the area reflects a measure of altruism. The islanders, who sometimes view their reliance on Western donors as lingering colonialism, welcome a broadening of outside assistance. ☐

#### Present-Day Stability, but Some Clouds

16. With a legacy of smooth transition to independence and generally stable societies, the South Pacific island nations have greater prospects for continued stability than many newly independent states.<sup>3</sup> There is a growing sense of nationhood, even in ethnically diverse Papua New Guinea. Democratic institutions are well established, and the island nations have a record of orderly change of government that probably will continue. A regional custom of reaching decisions by long-drawn-out discussions leading to consensus mutes controversy and militates against extremist positions on issues of regional concern. ☐

17. Despite these pluses, the individual island states have problems that could become destabilizing. The darkest cloud on the Pacific horizon is the economic outlook. Most of the islands have been hit by the global recession. The costs of imports have risen, while the value of exports such as copra and sugar has plummeted. So far, the islands have managed by a combination of external aid, budget cutbacks, and increased emigration. With few natural resources and high birth rates, most of the islands will continue to require external support. ☐

18. Fiji faces increasing political polarization between ethnic Fijians and the more numerous Indians, descendants of sugar plantation workers brought in before the turn of the century. Although the Indians seem resigned to constitutional provisions that promote Fijian political dominance, they have become sufficiently frustrated by the constitutionally sanctioned Fijian stranglehold on landownership to emigrate in

<sup>3</sup> For sketches of the island states, see the annexes. ☐

small numbers. Neither the Fijian nor the Indian political parties' leaders want violent confrontations, but the trend toward racial polarization will be difficult to reverse. ☐

19. Secessionist tendencies in ethnically fragmented Papua New Guinea have been resolved, but the country's promising economic future is clouded by declining world prices for its mineral exports. The government's sharp decline in revenue, plus a drift of rural migrants into urban areas where jobs are few, raises the specter of social disturbances with which the government would be ill prepared to cope. ☐

20. Vanuatu has the strongest likelihood of instability of any South Pacific independent state. It has been impossible to bridge the divisions left by 74 years of joint British-French rule under which there were parallel administrative and educational establishments. Vanuatu has been set on an erratic political course by Prime Minister Lini, an Anglican minister

21. Tonga, the South Pacific's sole kingdom, faces social pressures from population growth (2.1 percent annually) that has outstripped the ability of the government to provide a constitutionally guaranteed plot of land for each household. The traditional relief for overpopulation—emigration to New Zealand—has been reduced by New Zealand, which is already burdened by high unemployment. ☐

#### Bilateral Issues Facing the United States

22. A number of issues, including the antinuclear movement, fishing rights, and seabed mining, pose increasing problems for US interests. The popularity of the United States is also on the wane as those who remember the US military effort during World War II decline as a share of the population. Increasingly there is a perception that the United States has ignored the area, particularly over the past decade. ☐

#### The Antinuclear Mood

23. The regional fear of nuclear contamination has created the most immediate problem for the United States—in the form of bans imposed last year by Vanuatu and Fiji on port calls by US naval vessels, nuclear-propelled as well as conventionally powered

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ones on suspicion that they could be nuclear armed. The threat of widespread adoption of the ban, which would have inhibited the movement of US warships, was eased by Fiji's lifting of its ban in February 1983. Nevertheless, nuclear concerns are strong, and several governments are sufficiently uncertain about the safety of allowing nuclear ships in port to become inclined toward port bans in the future. ☐

24. Antinuclear sentiment in the South Pacific dates back to US atomic tests in the Pacific in the 1940s and 1950s. Subsequent French tests in French Polynesia have kept the issue alive, even though these tests have been conducted underground since 1975. The issue was rekindled in late 1981 by rumors of leakage at the French test site, by consideration by the United States and Japan of disposal of nuclear waste in the Pacific, and by the growing antinuclear movement in the United States and Western Europe. ☐

25. Antinuclear sentiment took a new direction by focusing on nuclear armaments and nuclear propulsion. This made the United States a target because of the longstanding policy of not disclosing whether US warships are nuclear armed and from the fact that the US Navy is increasingly (now 40 percent) nuclear powered. ☐

26. Vanuatu set the stage for the new round of concern in February 1982 when it withdrew an invitation to two conventionally powered US naval vessels out of pique over the US nondisclosure policy. Fiji's Prime Minister Ratu Mara, prompted in part by preelection jitters that caused him to try to capitalize on what he read as the Fijian electorate's antinuclear mood, followed up a few weeks later with a similar ban. He gained a greater appreciation of the safety of nuclear propulsion from briefings during a visit to CINCPAC in Honolulu in September 1982, and decided in February 1983 to lift Fiji's port ban.<sup>4</sup> ☐

27. Renewed port access to Fiji was underscored by permission for a visit of a US warship in March 1983. Access to Papua New Guinea seems assured by the return to office last August of Prime Minister Somare, who is more relaxed than his predecessor about the US

policy of not commenting on whether a ship is nuclear armed. Papua New Guinea's policy may incline the neighboring Solomon Islands not to make an issue of the US nondisclosure policy, even though the Solomons do not accept it. Tonga will continue to welcome and even solicit port visits, partly because of the government's pressing need for revenue. Western Samoa's uncertain attitude is less serious in light of assured access to neighboring American Samoa, and there is little reason for ships to put in to the remaining small island countries. ☐

28. Fiji's recent action has left Vanuatu isolated in an unyielding stance. With restoration of port calls at neighboring Fiji, Vanuatu's attitude will not seriously inhibit US ship movements. ☐

29. External agitation could work against the recent relaxation of port bans. The possibility of a Labor government in New Zealand after the elections in the fall of 1984—given the Muldoon government's slim parliamentary majority and New Zealand's economic slide—could rekindle doubts in the South Pacific over permitting nuclear-powered ships in port. The Labor government that was in office from 1972 to 1975 banned US warships from New Zealand ports and actively orchestrated the antinuclear movement in the South Pacific. Antinuclear sentiment is widespread in New Zealand, and the Labor Party has capitalized on it. Although new Labor Party leader Lange—unlike his predecessor Rowling—accepts the safety of nuclear propulsion and believes a formula could be worked out to accommodate New Zealand reservations over the US nondisclosure policy, he still must work within the framework of antinuclear opinion in his party and among the public. ☐

30. Concern in Australia over nuclear contamination and proliferation, although common, is not as deep seated as in New Zealand, and the return of Labor to office after the national elections in March 1983 does not threaten US interests. Despite considerable antinuclear sentiment in the Labor Party, prevailing acceptance of nuclear propulsion forced then party chief Hayden—who became Foreign Minister in 1983—to back away from his support in 1982 of a Labor state premier's ban on port calls by US nuclear-powered warships. Deputy Prime Minister Bowen has floated the idea of a southern hemisphere nuclear-free

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zone, but the proposal specifically exempts nuclear-powered vessels.<sup>5</sup> [ ]

#### Maritime Issues—Fishing and Law of the Sea

31. All of the island nations have declared 200-mile exclusive economic zones in the waters surrounding them (see appended foldout map). With many of them almost devoid of natural resources on land, they have come to view the surrounding seas, especially the schools of tuna that migrate through the area, as the key to prosperity.<sup>6</sup> They do not have the capability to exploit the fishing grounds themselves, but they see the prospect of revenue from fees imposed on foreign fishing vessels and from joint ventures with distant nations fishing in their waters. [ ]

32. Any US stance that seems to blur dreams of riches from the sea has a detrimental effect on relations with the island nations. They are all nettled by the US Government position that highly migratory tuna do not fall under the exclusive control of island nations and, if managed at all, should be managed regionally by the distant fishing states and the island nations. This stand, which resulted in the seizure of a US tuna boat by Papua New Guinea last year, is seen by the islanders as US insensitivity to their economic aspirations. There may be more fishing boat incidents as US tuna boats, faced with declining catches in the eastern Pacific, extend their operations westward into the maritime zones claimed by the island states. [ ]

33. The island nations are distressed over the US decision not to sign the law of the sea treaty and by US efforts to establish a separate multilateral seabed mining agreement. They view this as US insensitivity to their aspirations to share in the management of, and revenues derived from, mining the international seabed beyond their economic zones. According to some government officials in New Zealand, unhappiness over the US position on law of the sea could incline the islanders to be even less cooperative on other issues of US interest, such as deep sea fishing and nuclear questions. [ ]

34. While islanders have been vocal over US failure to sign the law of the sea treaty, fishing rights take priority on their economic agenda. Negative feelings over the US policy on fishing were underscored by the length to which US tuna policy was criticized in the communique of the annual South Pacific Forum meeting in August 1982. On the other hand, US failure to sign the law of the sea treaty was given only brief attention in the communique. The communique only voiced "concern" and "regret" over the US position on law of the sea but warned that its attitude on tuna had "serious implications" for its wider relationship with Forum countries. [ ]

35. Many South Pacific islands look to tuna as their most important source of income. By contrast, mining of the seabed will not take place for at least a decade, and profits will be minimal for some time after that. Thus the island nations will judge the United States more on its attitude toward tuna and other bilateral issues, such as trade and investment. If Washington can satisfy them on these issues, dissatisfaction over the US attitude toward seabed mining will be relatively minor. [ ]

36. We expect islander annoyance over the US Government policy on tuna to ease as the US fishing industry—with US Government encouragement—moves toward signing fishing agreements with the individual island states. Several island countries tried unsuccessfully in talks in Honolulu last year to reach agreement on terms of a regional fishing licensing scheme. However, Kiribati, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia recently agreed on licensing arrangements with the US tuna industry, and Papua New Guinea is interested in renegotiating an agreement that expired at the end of 1982. Realization of revenues from fishing licenses as the US tuna fleet extends its operations into the central and southwest Pacific matters more to the islanders than the principle of US recognition of their claim to control tuna. [ ]

#### Disputed Island Treaties

37. Another point of contention is the islanders' resentment over US failure to implement four treaties that relinquished US claims to islands now included within the boundaries of Kiribati (formerly Gilbert Islands), Tuvalu (formerly Ellice Islands), Tokelau, and the Cook Islands. The treaties were supported by both

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the present and the previous US administrations, but have languished in the US Senate for over two years. Delayed ratification of the treaties is seen by the islanders as evidence that Washington does not care about their concerns. ☐

#### Micronesia

38. The South Pacific nations have also shown skepticism over whether the new relationship the United States has negotiated with its UN trusteeship, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia), actually confers full independence. Under the first agreement concluded in 1975 after six years of negotiations, the Mariana Islands accepted a commonwealth status akin to that of Puerto Rico. Under recently concluded talks with the other three components of Micronesia—Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia—plebiscites are being held for popular approval of “free association” with the United States that gives the islands control over their domestic affairs and foreign relations, except where the latter impinge on US defense and security interests and responsibilities. Reservations among the South Pacific island states over the free association arrangement were shown recently by Papua New Guinea. It made its willingness to be an observer of the plebiscites conditional on being assured that the Micronesians would be offered independence as a voting option. ☐

39. The Micronesian groupings’ anticipated greater involvement in regional affairs could accentuate any differences they might have with the United States. For example, they share the independent South Pacific nations’ objections to US policies on tuna and on law of the sea and may now be encouraged to be more outspoken. Moreover, with their new status, the United States will be encouraging the Micronesian entities toward participation in Pacific island affairs. Until now they have had little opportunity to forge links with the island nations to their south, except for the Federated States of Micronesia’s attendance as an observer at the past two South Pacific Forum meetings. ☐

40. The independent island nations do not appear to question American Samoa’s ties to the United States, it being apparent that the relationship reflects the Samoans’ preference. ☐

#### Regional Issues

##### Communist Probing

41. We expect the Soviets to continue persistent efforts to penetrate the South Pacific, but—barring a significant improvement in East-West relations—we see little likelihood of establishment of more than a marginal Soviet diplomatic presence over the next five years. Any such Soviet presence would work to influence the islanders against visits of US warships while facilitating Soviet intelligence collection against the ANZUS allies. Although the allies monitor Soviet activities in the region and share information collected, we are often unable to evaluate the intent and significance of Soviet efforts. ☐

42. Regional suspicions of the Soviets are deep and transcend disapproval of Soviet policies in Afghanistan and Poland. The islands’ conservative social structures, Christian church influence, and traditional ties with the West all militate against radical political philosophies. We believe the only country that would be tempted to accommodate the Soviets would be Vanuatu, and even it would be hesitant to break with the regional consensus. Vanuatu’s recent exchange of diplomatic relations with Cuba is illustrative of its independent bent. Although there apparently has been no decision for mutual establishment of resident diplomatic missions, the fact of diplomatic relations increases the possibility of Cuba’s acting as a Soviet surrogate in the area. ☐

43. Suspicions of the Soviet Union do not rule out the islanders’ raising the Soviet bogey to elicit more aid from traditional donors, led by Australia and New Zealand. The island states have used this ploy successfully before. Economic considerations could also prompt some give in the anti-Soviet stance short of moving into a political relationship. For example, there is likely to be a continuation of allowing Soviet cruise ships to call at island ports, because the economic benefits are hard for the islanders to resist. Nor is islander aversion to the Soviets strong enough to prevent attraction to continuing Soviet offers to do oceanographic research. The ANZUS allies may be challenged to counter each Soviet offer with an ANZUS-sponsored program, as they did after the first Soviet offer in 1980. The cost is not great and, if paid, would keep the Soviets out. The US contribution to the

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follow-on research program desired by the islanders would probably be modest.

44. With the apparent Soviet inability—in the face of deep regional suspicions—to penetrate local media and social and political groups, we anticipate that Soviet activity over the next few years will continue focusing on influencing the fledgling regional trade union organizations. The Soviets can do this without appearing to be directly involved; they have a natural channel via leftist Australian and New Zealand trade unionists. The Soviets in past years have sponsored visits to the Soviet Union by South Pacific trade unionists. Most returned home unimpressed, which probably caused a switch to working through sympathetic Australians and New Zealanders

45. We do not expect significant Soviet inroads into the regional trade union movement. Only one regional leader, the head of the small Solomons trade federation, is a Soviet advocate. A hedge against Soviet success is the resentment of island trade union leaders against outsiders who inject political topics that divert attention from basic wage and employment issues. A relatively easy way of countering the Soviets—advocated by Australia and New Zealand—is greater US trade union activity in the area, particularly invitations to South Pacific unionists to visit the United States.

#### The French Territories

46. Agitation for independence in the French territory of New Caledonia will probably be the most destabilizing factor in the South Pacific in the coming five years. Neighboring Vanuatu will be active in encouraging Melanesian brethren in New Caledonia. This decolonization question—along with nuclear testing in French Polynesia—will make the French the target of South Pacific Forum criticism.

47. We doubt that France will devise a viable political solution for New Caledonia within the next

five years. The reforms of the Mitterrand government designed to give the indigenous Melanesians—the *kanaks*—greater political power and landownership have fallen short of satisfying them and yet are resisted by the local French—the *caldoches*. France feels less tenacious about holding on as nickel deposits become depleted and world market prices stay depressed. Also, Paris probably calculates that an impression of moving New Caledonia toward independence will reduce pressure from the South Pacific Forum for independence for French Polynesia.

48. Any French disposition to bow out of New Caledonia is complicated by the difficulty of devising a political arrangement that will give political power to the minority *kanaks*, while still protecting the interests of the cumulative majority composed of resident French and of immigrant Polynesians and Asians. Ethnic strains and communal violence may increase if the *kanaks*, eclipsed for years in local elections by the combined votes of the French, Asians, and Polynesians, are unwilling to make concessions to non-Melanesians in an independent New Caledonia.

49. Regional attention on French Polynesia will be focused on the French nuclear testing program. We anticipate no steps toward independence for French Polynesia over the next five years, because the paramount French interest is in maintaining the nuclear testing site on Mururoa Atoll. Independence is not an overriding goal of the local population, and local aspirations can be largely met with steps taken or currently in train toward greater self-government. The French Polynesians, unlike the New Caledonian Melanesians, have developed an affinity for France based on intermarriage and adoption of many aspects of the Western lifestyle. The economic benefits from the nuclear testing program also trickle down and militate against strong sentiment in favor of independence.

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## ANNEX A

## A SOUTH PACIFIC PRIMER

The tropical South Pacific is unique. It is one of the largest areas in the world, yet contains one of the smallest and most dispersed populations. Encompassing an ocean area south of the Equator of 15 million square kilometers—from Papua New Guinea on the west through French Polynesia on the east—it has only 5 million people. Aside from Papua New Guinea, which stands out because of its size (475,000 square kilometers, or slightly larger than California) and population (over 3 million), the rest of the area is a collection of ministates ranging in size down to minuscule Nauru—7,700 people living on an island of 21 square kilometers.

Beginning with Western Samoa in 1962, nine of the island groups—Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Western Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Nauru, Kiribati, and Tuvalu—have attained independence. This was accomplished without a struggle, and in fact some had to be nudged toward independence by their administering powers. The movement toward independence has nearly run its course, largely because France shows no inclination to grant early independence to its two major territories—New Caledonia and French Polynesia—and the other South Pacific dependencies are too tiny to have realistic hopes for independence.

The people of the area are mainly Christian, conservative, and strongly Western oriented. These characteristics have militated against any attraction to

or identification with the radicalism of the Third World. Only three of the states are economically viable—phosphate-rich Nauru; Papua New Guinea, with a wealth of natural resources; and Fiji, with sugar, timber, and earnings from tourism. Even the economic straits of the remaining states have not inclined them toward radicalism. Only Vanuatu, the product of an inefficient joint British-French condominium, does not fit the regional pattern; it has strong seeds of instability that could be disruptive to the region as a whole.

The tropical Pacific is divided into three basic ethnic areas—Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. Despite some mixing over the centuries, the basic tri-racial pattern endures. Polynesia, from the Greek for “many islands,” comprises the islands largely east of the 180th meridian, both north and south of the Equator. Its peoples range from the ethnic Hawaiians on the north to the indigenous New Zealanders, the Maoris, on the south. Melanesia, the island groups west of the 180th meridian and south of the Equator, is named from the Greek for “black islands” because of its dark-skinned people. That part of the Pacific west of 180th meridian but north of the Equator is called Micronesia—“small islands.” The United States has administered most of Micronesia as a UN trusteeship since World War II. The Micronesians have been only tangentially affected by developments in the adjacent South Pacific, but this may change as the islands evolve toward self-government.

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ANNEX B

SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM MEMBERS

Papua New Guinea

Area: 475,000 sq km  
Population: 3.2 million  
Independence: 1975

A giant by the South Pacific yardstick, California-sized Papua (pronounced *PAP-oo-uh*) New Guinea—with an abundance of natural resources—has the brightest economic potential of any nation in the region. Current low world market prices for its raw material exports—particularly copper, which usually accounts for more than one-half of foreign exchange earnings—have hurt the economy.

The young nation has acquitted itself well even though it had to be nudged into independence by Australia. It has utilized fully its short supply of trained leaders, parliamentary democracy is established and tested, and a sense of national identity has developed despite the centrifugal strains of clans numbering in the hundreds.



Michael Somare,

Prime Minister of  
Papua New Guinea

Fiji

Area: 18,300 sq km  
Population: 650,000  
Independence: 1970

A stable parliamentary democracy, Fiji faces growing and potentially destabilizing political polarization between ethnic Fijians and the now more numerous Indians. Fiji is beset with economic problems from the world oversupply of its major export—sugar—and the adverse effect on its tourist industry of the global recession.

Fiji is the most active of any South Pacific island nation in international affairs. It has had a 600-man infantry battalion in the Lebanon international peacekeeping force since 1978 and last year provided 500 men to the new Sinai peacekeeping force.



Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara,

Prime Minister of  
Fiji

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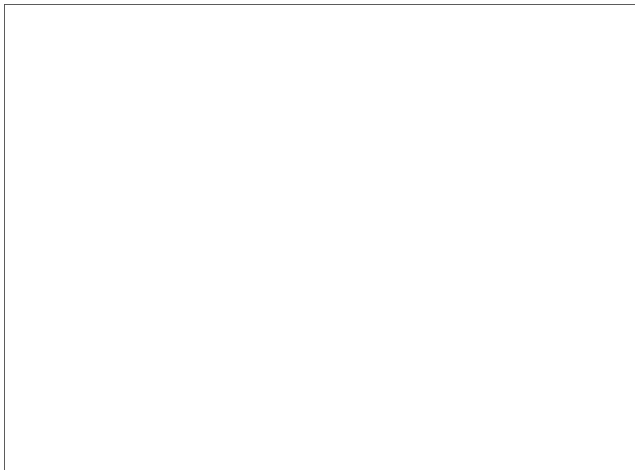
**Solomon Islands**

Area: 30,000 sq km

Population: 250,000

Independence: 1978

Second largest of the South Pacific island nations after Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands has a somewhat tumultuous political scene where personality clashes are magnified in what equates to a small-town environment. The unpredictable behavior of Prime Minister Mamaloni contributes to the unsettled environment. Ironically, corruption and a failing economy tend to bolster Mamaloni's position in office, because no one else wants the job. The Solomons' developing export sales of copra, timber, and fish have been hurt by current low world commodity prices. ☐

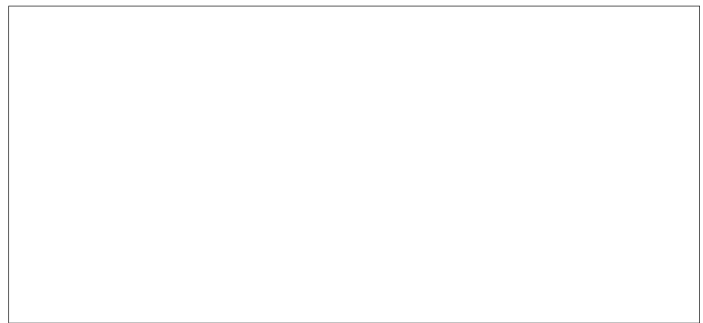
**Solomon Mamaloni,**Prime Minister of  
Solomon Islands**Western Samoa**

Area: 2,850 sq km

Population: 160,000

Independence: 1962

Since it became the first independent South Pacific island nation, this former New Zealand trusteeship has shown a high level of stability. This is attributable to the innate conservatism of the traditional Samoan extended family social system; to considerable emigration to New Zealand, American Samoa, and the United States, which provides a safety valve for overpopulation; to large-scale aid from Australia and New Zealand; and to a strong Christian influence. These factors are weakening, however, and a prolonged civil servants strike in 1981 was indicative of growing restiveness. The economy has serious problems—inflation is high, and exports—largely of copra and cocoa—amount to only one-third of imports. ☐

**Tofilau Eti,**Prime Minister of  
Western Samoa

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## Tonga

Area: 800 sq km  
Population: 100,000  
Independence: 1970

This island kingdom has a notable sense of national pride. Respect for the monarchy, the influence of the church, and a homogeneous population have contributed to an impressively stable society. Nevertheless, economic problems may in time weaken the social fabric. Tonga's economy is excessively concentrated on coconuts and bananas and is increasingly dependent on outside aid and remittances from Tongans working abroad. ☐



**Taufa 'ahau Tupou IV,**

King of Tonga

## Vanuatu

Area: 14,800 sq km  
Population: 120,000  
Independence: 1980

The product of three-quarters of a century of uncoordinated British-French stewardship over the predecessor New Hebrides condominium, Vanuatu faces formidable odds against creating a unified state from the deep divisions left from the colonial legacy of dual administrations. ☐

☐ Although Vanuatu's maverick bent has been somewhat held in check by the Pacific custom of acting in consort with one's neighbors, it remains the Pacific island nation most likely to break with regional consensus on any issue and to adopt a more radical course. ☐



**Walter Lini,**

Prime Minister of  
Vanuatu


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## Kiribati

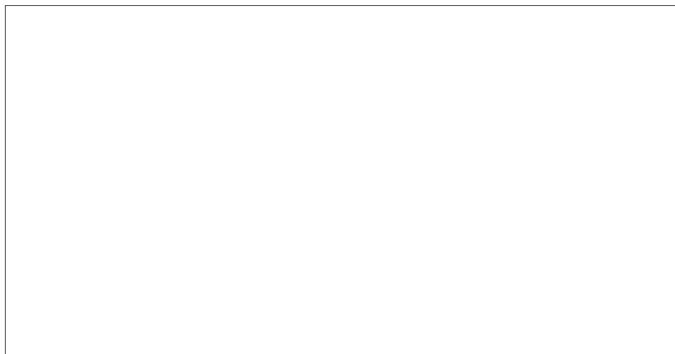
Area: 684 sq km  
Population: 60,000  
Independence: 1979

A collection of 33 islands, Kiribati (*KEE-ree-bahs*)—formerly the Gilbert Islands—has had growing economic problems since the depletion in 1979 of phosphate deposits that had been the mainstay of the economy, providing 50 percent of the country's revenue. The only exports now are copra and fish. Social and unemployment problems are also increasing as people from the outer islands drift to the capital on Tarawa Atoll. The government, led by a young Prime Minister of exceptional competence, is putting a high proportion of foreign aid money—from the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand—into outer island development. 




**Ieremia Tabai,**

Prime Minister of  
Kiribati



## Tuvalu

Area: 26 sq km  
Population: 8,200  
Independence: 1978

Comprising nine verdant but unproductive coral atolls, Tuvalu (formerly the Ellice Islands) ekes out a per capita income of \$240 a year from a modest output of coconut products, from handicrafts, and from remittances from up to 2,000 Tuvaluans working aboard foreign ships or in the phosphate industry on Nauru. The country is still reeling financially from the previous Prime Minister's investment in 1979 of \$600,000—the government's entire cash assets at the time—in a shady Texas land scheme. Only a portion of the money has been recovered. 

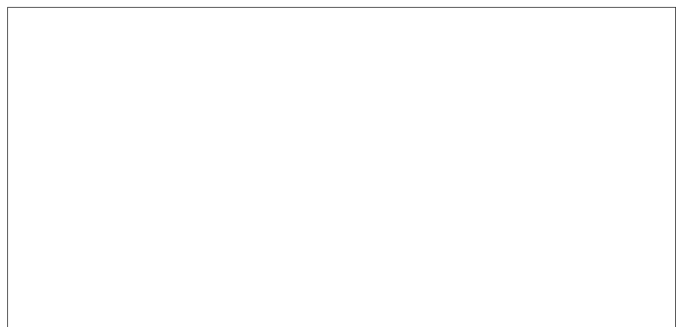
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**Tomasi Puapua,**

Prime Minister of  
Tuvalu



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
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## Nauru

Area: 21 sq km  
Population: 7,700  
Independence: 1968

Phosphate-rich Nauru has one of the world's highest per capita incomes, a happy circumstance that contributes to stability for the time being. Problems of the moment are largely social, associated with the indulgent lifestyle fostered by the unmatched economic well-being—diabetes, obesity, and alcoholism. Manual labor in the phosphate industry is done by guest workers from other Pacific islands; the Nauruans live off royalties or work at local white-collar jobs. The economic situation could quickly deteriorate, however, after the expected depletion of phosphate deposits within the next decade. Moreover, the government has been negligent in investing surplus phosphate earnings to ensure the populace's continued livelihood. 




**Hammer DeRoburt,**

Prime Minister of  
Nauru

## Cook Islands

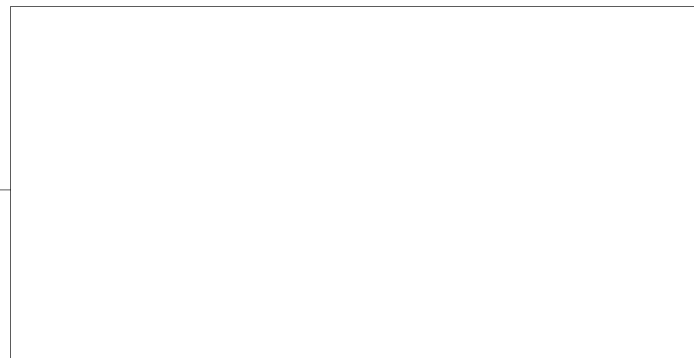
Area: 240 sq km  
Population: 18,000

This island group is a self-governing entity in free association with New Zealand, which handles its foreign affairs. As New Zealand citizens, Cook Islanders have free access to New Zealand; more now live there than in the islands. The economy is heavily dependent on budgetary assistance from New Zealand. Agriculture is mainly at the subsistence level; there are small exports of citrus fruit, bananas, pineapples, and copra. 



**Geoffrey Henry,**

Premier of  
Cook Islands



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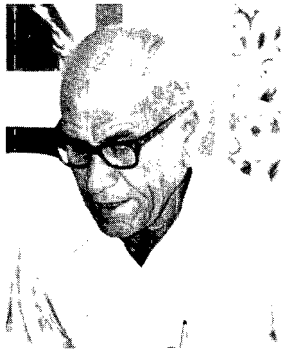
## Niue

Area: 259 sq km

Population: 3,200

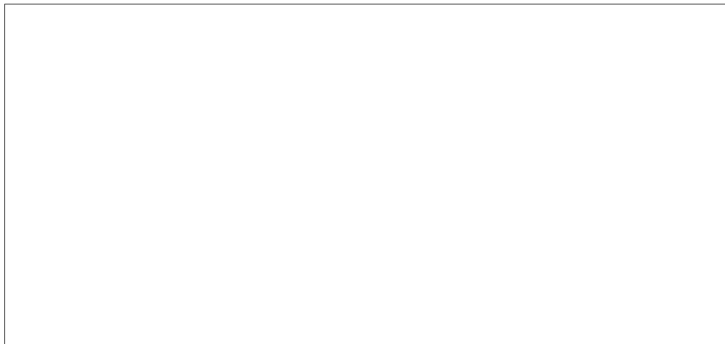
This island is also self-governing in free association with New Zealand, which is responsible for its foreign relations. Depopulation is the island government's main concern. More Niueans now live in New Zealand, to which they have unrestricted entry as New Zealand citizens, than on Niue. The main economic activity is subsistence agriculture; small amounts of copra and tropical fruit are exported. 

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**Robert Rex,**

Premier of  
Niue



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## ANNEX C

### THE FRENCH TERRITORIES

#### New Caledonia

Area: 22,000 sq km  
Population: 140,000

An overseas territory of France, New Caledonia has three representatives in the French National Assembly. Extraction of rich nickel deposits dominates the local economy, which is now depressed as a result of low world market prices for nickel. ☐

The territory is wracked by ethnic strains, and the political scene promises to become increasingly tumultuous as the indigenous Melanesians (*kanaks*) agitate for independence. The *kanaks* are now outnumbered by resident French and immigrant Pacific islanders, Indonesians, and Vietnamese. Relegated to the hinterlands by preceding French administrations, they see reforms over the past year by the Socialist government in Paris as too little and too late. Melanesian determination to create an independent state catering only to Melanesian interests makes it almost impossible for the French to come up with an arrangement fair to all racial groups. ☐

#### French Polynesia

Area: 4,000 sq km  
Population: 150,000

An overseas territory of France, French Polynesia elects three representatives to the National Assembly

in Paris. Use of one of the territory's atolls as the French nuclear testing site makes continued possession of special importance to Paris. Although sentiment in favor of independence is growing, it has been kept in check by French concessions toward local government and from the economic benefits of the nuclear testing program and tourism. Polynesian affinity for the French lifestyle and considerable intermarriage also act as hedges against agitation for independence. ☐

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#### Wallis and Futuna

Area: 220 sq km  
Population: 11,000

The two island groups of this French overseas territory are about 240 kilometers apart. France gains little material benefit and probably regards its presence as part of its "civilizing" mission. The islanders realize that they have no economic base for independence and grudgingly accept French rule. Economic activity is limited to subsistence agriculture. About 11,000 islanders have emigrated to New Caledonia, although economic conditions there have now caused this flow to cease. ☐

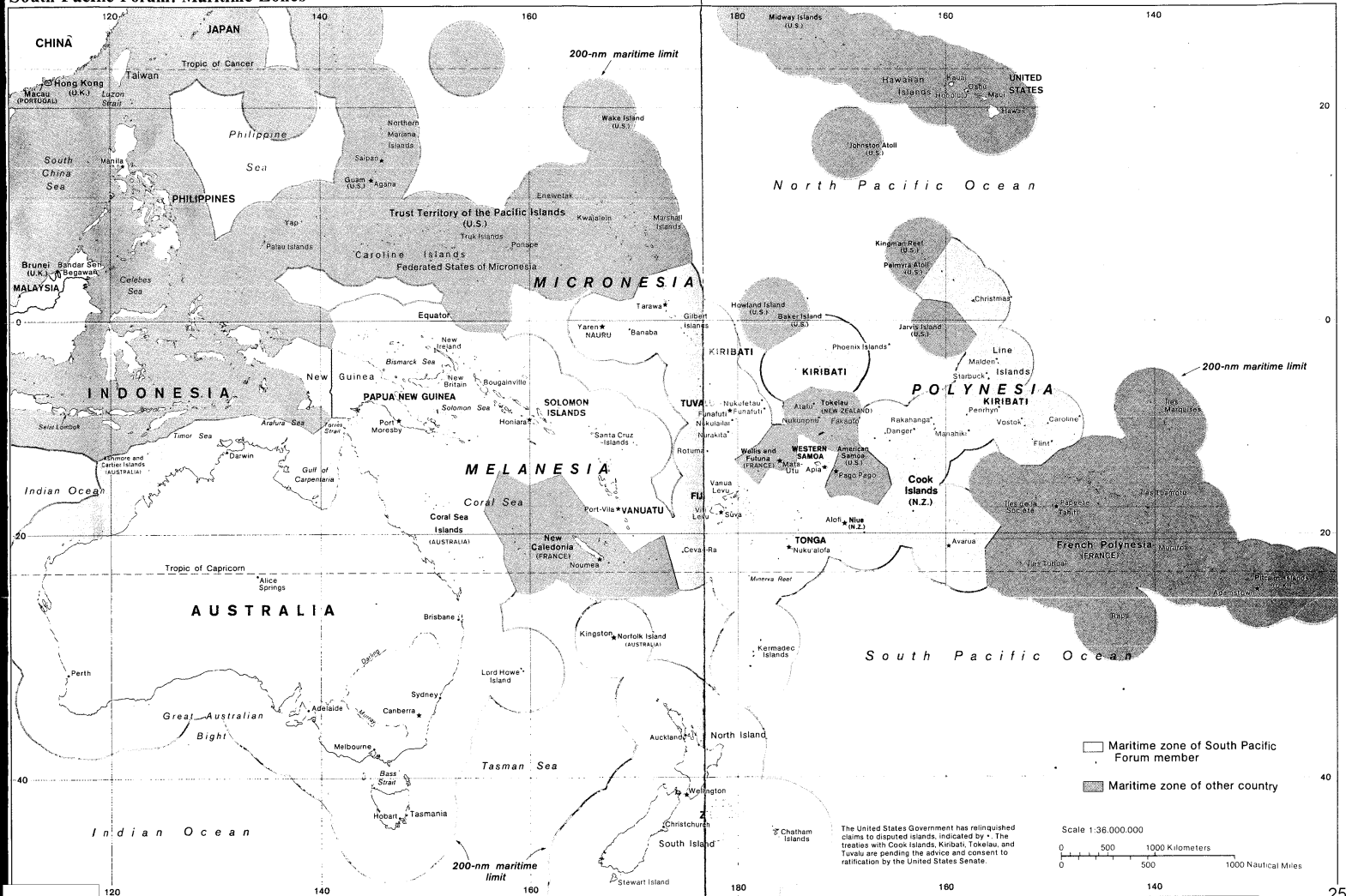
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## South Pacific Forum: Maritime Zones



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